

(WASHINGTON, D.C) - Congressman Wally Herger today voted for H.R. 5441, the "Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act," and H.R. 4954, the "SAFE Port Act." The House passed both measures. Among other agencies and programs, H.R. 5441 funds efforts to strengthen border security and stem the flow of illegal immigration. The SAFE Port Act would enhance security at American ports. Herger had the following reaction to House passage of these measures:

"Enhancing security at our borders is of paramount importance," Herger stated. "Our porous borders pose a serious risk to our nation because many individuals illegally crossing our border have criminal backgrounds, while others could have ties to terrorists. Meanwhile, security at our ports is inadequate and vulnerable to potential efforts by terrorists to smuggle deadly agents into our nation. These security risks are completely unacceptable.

"The Department of Homeland Security Appropriations measure provides \$21.3 billion for border protection and immigration enforcement. It provides for 1,500 new Border Patrol agents, new border fencing, nearly 7,000 additional detention beds, and more money to assist state and local efforts to enforce immigration law. It also includes legislation I cosponsored to authorize long prison sentences for individuals caught constructing or financing the construction of an unauthorized tunnel along the border. This measure will strengthen our fight against illegal immigration, and I'm very pleased the President has indicated that he'll sign it into law."

Herger concluded, "I'm also pleased that the House passed the SAFE Port Act. This measure significantly bolsters port security and makes it easier to track and protect containers coming into the United States. It will help us guard against potential terrorist plots of the future."